

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1834

To authorize the national ocean exploration program and the national undersea research program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 29, 2007

Mr. SAXTON (for himself, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. FARR, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. ABERCROMBIE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science and Technology, and in addition to the Committees on Natural Resources and Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To authorize the national ocean exploration program and the national undersea research program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **TITLE I—NATIONAL OCEAN**
4 **EXPLORATION PROGRAM**

5 **SECTION 101. SHORT TITLE.**

6 This title may be cited as the “National Ocean Explo-
7 ration Program Act”.

1 **SEC. 102. AUTHORIZATION.**

2 The Secretary of Commerce, through the Adminis-
3 trator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-
4 tration, shall, in consultation with the National Science
5 Foundation and other appropriate Federal agencies, con-
6 duct a coordinated national ocean exploration program
7 within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
8 tion that promotes collaboration with existing programs
9 of the Administration, including those authorized in title
10 II.

11 **SEC. 103. AUTHORITIES.**

12 In carrying out the program authorized under section
13 102, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and At-
14 mospheric Administration (in this title referred to as the
15 “Administrator”) shall—

16 (1) conduct interdisciplinary voyages or other
17 scientific activities of discovery in conjunction with
18 other Federal agencies or academic or educational
19 institutions, to explore and survey little known areas
20 of the marine environment, inventory, observe, and
21 assess living and nonliving marine resources, and re-
22 port such findings;

23 (2) give priority attention to deep ocean re-
24 gions, with a focus on deep water marine systems
25 that hold potential for important scientific discov-

1 eries, such as hydrothermal vent communities and
2 seamounts;

3 (3) conduct scientific voyages to locate, define,
4 and document historic shipwrecks, submerged sites,
5 and other ocean exploration activities that combine
6 archaeology and oceanographic sciences;

7 (4) develop and implement, in consultation with
8 the National Science Foundation, a transparent
9 process for merit-based peer-review and approval of
10 proposals for activities to be conducted under this
11 program;

12 (5) enhance the technical capability of the
13 United States marine science community by pro-
14 moting the development of improved oceanographic
15 research, communication, navigation, and data col-
16 lection systems, as well as underwater platforms and
17 sensors and autonomous vehicles;

18 (6) accept donations of property, data, and
19 equipment to be applied for the purpose of exploring
20 the oceans or increasing knowledge of the oceans;
21 and

22 (7) establish an ocean exploration forum to en-
23 courage partnerships and promote communication
24 among experts and other stakeholders in order to

1 enhance the scientific and technical expertise and
2 relevance of the national program.

3 **SEC. 104. OCEAN EXPLORATION ADVISORY BOARD.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator shall ap-
5 point an Ocean Exploration Advisory Board composed of
6 experts in relevant fields to—

7 (1) advise the Administrator on priority areas
8 for survey and discovery;

9 (2) assist the program in the development of a
10 five-year strategic plan for exploration and dis-
11 covery;

12 (3) annually review the quality and effectiveness
13 of the proposal review process established under sec-
14 tion 103(4); and

15 (4) provide other assistance and advice as re-
16 quested by the Administrator.

17 (b) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Federal Advisory Com-
19 mittee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the
20 Ocean Exploration Advisory Board.

21 (2) COMPLIANCE.—Notwithstanding paragraph
22 (1), the Ocean Exploration Advisory Board shall be
23 appointed and operate in a manner consistent with
24 all provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act
25 with respect to—

1 (A) the balance of membership;

2 (B) provisions of public notice regarding
3 activities of the Ocean Exploration Advisory
4 Board;

5 (C) open meetings; and

6 (D) public access to documents created by
7 the Ocean Exploration Advisory Board.

8 **SEC. 105. OCEAN EXPLORATION TECHNOLOGY AND INFRA-**
9 **STRUCTURE TASK FORCE.**

10 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
11 tion, in coordination with the National Science Founda-
12 tion, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration,
13 the United States Geological Survey, the Department of
14 the Navy, the Mineral Management Service, and relevant
15 governmental, non-governmental, academic, industry, and
16 other experts, shall convene an ocean exploration tech-
17 nology and infrastructure task force to develop and imple-
18 ment a strategy—

19 (1) to facilitate transfer of new exploration
20 technology to the program authorized under section
21 102;

22 (2) to improve availability of communications
23 infrastructure, including satellite capabilities, to the
24 program;

1 (3) to develop an integrated, workable, and
2 comprehensive data management information proc-
3 essing system that will make information on unique
4 and significant features obtained by the program
5 available for research and management purposes;

6 (4) to conduct public outreach activities that
7 improve the public understanding of ocean science,
8 resources, and processes, in conjunction with rel-
9 evant programs of the National Oceanic and Atmos-
10 pheric Administration, the National Science Founda-
11 tion, and other agencies; and

12 (5) to encourage cost-sharing partnerships with
13 governmental and non-governmental entities that
14 will assist in transferring exploration technology and
15 technical expertise to the program.

16 **SEC. 106. APPLICATION WITH OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF**
17 **LANDS ACT.**

18 Nothing in this title or title II supersedes, or limits
19 the authority of the Secretary of the Interior under the
20 Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et
21 seq.).

22 **SEC. 107. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

23 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na-
24 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry
25 out this title—

- 1 (1) \$30,500,000 for fiscal year 2008;
- 2 (2) \$33,550,000 for fiscal year 2009;
- 3 (3) \$36,905,000 for fiscal year 2010;
- 4 (4) \$40,596,000 for fiscal year 2011;
- 5 (5) \$44,655,000 for fiscal year 2012;
- 6 (6) \$49,121,000 for fiscal year 2013;
- 7 (7) \$54,033,000 for fiscal year 2014;
- 8 (8) \$59,436,000 for fiscal year 2015;
- 9 (9) \$65,379,000 for fiscal year 2016; and
- 10 (10) \$71,917,000 for fiscal year 2017.

11 **TITLE II—UNDERSEA RESEARCH**

12 **PROGRAM**

13 **SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.**

14 This title may be cited as the “National Undersea
15 Research Program Act of 2007”.

16 **SEC. 202. AUTHORIZATION.**

17 The Administrator of the National Oceanic and At-
18 mospheric Administration shall conduct an undersea re-
19 search program and shall designate a Director of that pro-
20 gram.

21 **SEC. 203. PURPOSE.**

22 The purpose of the program authorized under section
23 202 is to increase scientific knowledge essential for the
24 informed management, use, and preservation of oceanic,
25 coastal, and large lake resources through undersea re-

1 search, exploration, education, and technology develop-
2 ment. The program shall be part of the National Oceanic
3 and Atmospheric Administration's undersea research, edu-
4 cation, and technology development efforts, and shall
5 make available the infrastructure and expertise to service
6 the undersea science and technology needs of the academic
7 community and marine industry.

8 **SEC. 204. PROGRAM.**

9 The program authorized under section 202 shall be
10 conducted through a national headquarters, a network of
11 extramural regional undersea research centers that rep-
12 resent all relevant National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-
13 ministration regions, and a national technology institute.
14 Overall direction of the program will be provided by the
15 program director in coordination with a Council of Center
16 Directors comprised of the directors of the extramural re-
17 gional centers and the National Institute for Undersea
18 Science and Technology.

19 **SEC. 205. REGIONAL CENTERS AND INSTITUTE.**

20 (a) PROGRAMS.—The following research, exploration,
21 education, and technology programs shall be conducted
22 through the network of extramural regional centers and
23 the National Institute for Undersea Science and Tech-
24 nology:

1 (1) Core research and exploration based on na-
2 tional and regional undersea research priorities.

3 (2) Advanced undersea technology development
4 to support the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
5 Administration’s research mission and programs.

6 (3) Development, testing, and transition of ad-
7 vanced undersea technology associated with ocean
8 observatories, submersibles, advanced diving tech-
9 nologies, remotely operated vehicles, autonomous un-
10 derwater vehicles, and new sampling and sensing
11 technologies such as LEO-15, Pisces, and the
12 Aquarius habitat.

13 (4) Undersea science-based education and out-
14 reach programs to enrich ocean science education
15 and public awareness of the oceans and Great
16 Lakes.

17 (5) Discovery, study, and development of nat-
18 ural products from ocean and aquatic systems.

19 (b) OPERATIONS.—Operation of the extramural re-
20 gional centers and the National Institute for Undersea
21 Science and Technology shall leverage partnerships and
22 cooperative research with academia and private industry.

23 **SEC. 206. COMPETITIVENESS.**

24 Except for a small discretionary fund for rapid re-
25 sponse activities, for which no more than 10 percent of

1 the program budget shall be set aside, and for National
2 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-related service
3 projects, the external projects supported by the regional
4 centers shall be managed using an open and competitive
5 process to evaluate scientific merit, relevance to the Na-
6 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, regional
7 and national research priorities, and technical feasibility.

8 **SEC. 207. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

9 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na-
10 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry
11 out this title—

- 12 (1) \$17,500,000 for fiscal year 2008;
- 13 (2) \$19,500,000 for fiscal year 2009;
- 14 (3) \$21,500,000 for fiscal year 2010;
- 15 (4) \$23,500,000 for fiscal year 2011;
- 16 (5) \$25,500,000 for fiscal year 2012;
- 17 (6) \$27,500,000 for fiscal year 2013;
- 18 (7) \$29,500,000 for fiscal year 2014;
- 19 (8) \$31,500,000 for fiscal year 2015;
- 20 (9) \$33,500,000 for fiscal year 2016; and
- 21 (10) \$35,500,000 for fiscal year 2017.

1 **TITLE III—INTERAGENCY**
2 **FINANCING**

3 **SEC. 301. INTERAGENCY FINANCING.**

4 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
5 tion, the National Science Foundation, the Department of
6 the Navy, and other Federal agencies involved in the pro-
7 grams authorized under title I and II, are authorized to
8 participate in interagency financing and share, transfer,
9 receive, and spend funds appropriated to any Federal par-
10 ticipant in the program for the purposes of carrying out
11 any administrative or programmatic project or activity
12 under the program. Funds may be transferred among such
13 departments and agencies through an appropriate instru-
14 ment that specifies the goods, services, or space being ac-
15 quired from another Federal participant and the costs
16 thereof.

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